

What They Do

Laboratory Assistants help chemists, physicists, and other scientists in conducting tests, experiments, and analyses. They work in a variety of areas of biotechnology such as research, production, or process monitoring. Specific duties vary according to the purpose of the laboratory, and the type of tests completed. Laboratory Assistants always work under the direction of a scientist or team leader. They clean and maintain lab equipment and ensure the lab is stocked with necessary supplies.

Their responsibilities might include set-up; equipment maintenance, calibration and monitoring; troubleshooting; and sample labeling. They may also be responsible for maintaining samples, growth media and specimens, and ensuring quality control. Test results must be recorded and compiled daily, entered into computerized databases or entry books, and charts or graphs prepared to illustrate results.

*Laboratory Assistants in the biotech industry share characteristics of Biological Technicians and Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other. Detailed descriptions of these occupations may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities include:

- ▶ Biology – Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
- ▶ Science – Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.
- ▶ Oral Comprehension – The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- ▶ Mathematics – Using mathematics to solve problems.
- ▶ Reading Comprehension – Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- ▶ Operation and Control – Controlling operations of equipment or systems.

Training/Requirements

- ▶ Certification or associate degree in the laboratory sciences.
- ▶ Have up to two years of laboratory experience. (See **Additional Sources of Information.**)

Laboratory Assistants

Biotechnology Careers

What's the California Job Outlook?

While the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not collect data on Laboratory Assistants, the occupations listed below are found in the biotechnology industry and have similar duties. The California outlook and wage figures are drawn from all industries and represent occupations comparable to Laboratory Assistants.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2002	Estimated Number of Workers 2012	Average Annual Openings	2005 Wage Range (per hour)
Biological Technicians				
19-4021	5,800	7,400	260	\$14.15 to \$23.72
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other				
19-4099	11,600	14,300	540	\$15.63 to \$26.73

These figures do not include self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus openings due to separations.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, *Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation*, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Additional Sources of Information

American Institute of Biological Sciences
(202) 628-1500
www.aibs.org

Society of Industrial Microbiology
(703) 691-3357
www.simhq.org

Biotechnology Industry Organization
(202) 962-9200
www.bio.org

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)
<http://online.onetcenter.org>